

# BETWEEN NATO AND UN

## EU strategic culture and its approach to civil-military cooperation

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The European Union's approach to civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) in crisis response incorporates two different perspectives. The EU's official concept is shaped after NATO's military-centred vision and is subordinated to the achievement of military goals. However, the application of CIMIC in EU-led crisis response resembles the UN civilian-centred approach, aiming at supporting civilian environment and protection of humanitarian space. This article discusses this complex nature of the EU's approach to CIMIC in the context of the Union's strategic culture.

### Abstrakt

Přístup Evropské unie k civilně-vojenské spolupráci v rámci řešení krizí zahrnuje dvě perspektivy. Oficiální koncept EU je vystavěn na přístupu NATO, který je spíše vojensko-centrický a podřízený dosahování vojenských cílů. Nicméně aplikace CIMIC během reakcí na krizové situace připomíná civilní přístup OSN, jenž se orientuje na podporu civilního prostředí a ochranu humanitárního prostoru. Tento článek diskutuje komplexní povahu přístupu EU k CIMIC v kontextu unijní strategické kultury.

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### Klíčová slova

Evropská unie; civilně-vojenská spolupráce; CIMIC; strategická kultura; NATO; OSN.

### Keywords

European Union; civil-military cooperation; CIMIC; strategic culture; NATO; United Nations.

### Introduction

The European Union has proved to be a distinctive actor in the international security arena combining civilian and military instruments. Initially a civilian power, focused on development and humanitarian assistance, it now strives to wield a wide range of tools for crisis response, including military and policing. [1] Its international engagement can be related to a distinctive strategic culture, here understood as a context comprised of values, ideas, norms and tools that simultaneously influences and is influenced by strategic decisions and actions. [2] On the one hand, the Union's strategic culture is founded on the rejection of war, the emphasis of integration, democracy and respect for human rights. [3] It rests on the assumption that winning and maintaining peace requires protection of individuals and a comprehensive effort of actors

administering diverse tools. On the other hand, the EU's strategic culture validates declarations of a robust and rapid military involvement. [4] In this unique context, the EU shapes its tools for crisis response. Here, civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) constitutes an interesting example of a tool that brings together these two sides of the EU's strategic culture – humanitarian/development and military. As outlined by the EU-CIMIC concept, CIMIC is a military function facilitating communication and coordination of actions between the military forces and civilians present and active in the area of operation, e.g. local authorities, population or humanitarian and development organisations. [5]

The Union's approach to CIMIC is complex. In the official documents, EU-CIMIC follows the solutions proposed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and is therefore committed to a specific, military-centred perspective. [6] It focuses on supporting the military mission and increasing force protection by promoting a positive outlook on the armed forces. [7] However, the application of EU-CIMIC in the field assumes a different perspective, not provided for in the documents – resembling a civil-centred approach developed by the United Nations (UN). According to this alternative perspective, civil-military cooperation is conducted in support of civilian actors, in order to ensure the protection of humanitarian space and maximise civilian efforts. [8] In other words, even though the EU is committed to NATO's military-centred solutions in its official CIMIC concept, the UN's civil-centred perspective seems to be more prominent in the way it is applied in the EU-led crisis response. Why did these two perspectives on CIMIC emerge in the EU's approach to civil-military cooperation? How can they coexist? And how do they relate to the core values and concepts underlying the EU's strategic culture?

The aim of this article is to discuss this complex nature of the EU's approach to CIMIC in the context of the Union's strategic culture, which constitutes a space and rationale for the coexistence and intertwining of military- and civilian-centred EU-CIMIC. The article investigates how NATO and the UN's perspectives on CIMIC intertwine in the Union's approach and how they position the EU-CIMIC in relation to the foundational elements of the Union's strategic culture. This allows to understand why and how these two approaches to civil-military cooperation exist in the EU-CIMIC and discuss the possibility of strengthening its position in the EU crisis response. In order to reach this aim, I firstly present the selected theory of strategic culture and look into the foundational elements underlying the strategic culture of the EU. Next, I analyse and compare the UN's and NATO's approaches towards civil-military cooperation, thus characterising the two dominant CIMIC perspectives. In the final part of the article I offer a discussion on how these two perspectives on civil-military cooperation intertwine within the EU's approach, how they relate to the foundational elements of the Union's strategic culture and how the EU strategic culture helps to understand this mixture within the EU-CIMIC. The article ends with a summary of the main findings and conclusions on the possibility of strengthening the position of EU-CIMIC within the EU crisis response by more strongly aligning the orientation of the EU-CIMIC concept with the core of the Union's strategic culture.

## **EU strategic culture as a context**

The father of the concept of strategic culture, Jack Snyder, defines it as a “*sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to nuclear strategy*”. [9] His theory initiated what was later named the first generation of

literature on strategic culture, focused on policy differences “*caused by unique variations in macro-environmental variables such as deeply rooted historical experience, political culture, and geography*”. [10] This line of thought was later criticised, especially by representatives of the so-called third generation, who highlighted “*the interplay between strategic culture as an independent and strategic decisions as a dependent variable, against a list of competing intervening variables*”. [11] In this article, I follow the line of thought of the first generation of strategic culture theories as it allows the consideration of both the discourse and the characteristic practices of EU-led crisis response as equally important sources of knowledge on strategic culture. After Gray, I treat strategic culture as “*comprising the persisting (though not eternal) socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind, and preferred methods of operation that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community that has had a necessarily unique historical experience.*” [12]

Strategic culture creates a context for the behaviour of strategic actors but it is also affected and shaped by this behaviour. [13] It revolves around the core values and concepts or, as Longhurst puts it, foundational elements, which “*provide the deeper – basal – qualities, or fabric, of a strategic culture that have their origins in the primordial or formative phase of development*”. [14] By adopting this perspective, it is possible to analyse both the EU’s policy discourse on civil-military cooperation, as well as its application in the field and juxtapose them with the foundational elements of the Union’s strategic culture. Building on Pentland’s assumptions, I expand the understanding of strategic culture “*beyond military applications to broader realms of foreign and security policy and embracing the instruments of soft power*”. [15] In other words, for the purposes of this article, the EU’s strategic culture is viewed as a context, specific to geographically and historically confined security community, which comprises values, ideas, norms, patterns of behaviour, and tools, including soft and hard power. It revolves around core values and concepts which form a foundation for ideas, attitudes and *modi operandi* regarding the Union’s involvement in the international security arena. This conceptualisation allows the incorporation of both the documents regulating the EU-CIMIC, as well as EU-CIMIC practices, thus providing a context for discussing the complex nature of the EU’s approach to civil-military cooperation.

### **Foundational elements of the EU’s strategic culture**

The proposed definition of strategic culture is very broad, yet it allows to distinguish values and concepts which constitute a very distinctive foundation for the EU’s strategic culture. Among them are the common values inscribed in the treaties: “*respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights*” [16] which create a framework defining and constraining the EU’s engagement in international security relations. [17] The EU’s strategic culture has a distinctive character. Contrary to the traditional approach in which strategic culture is inseparably linked with the idea of war, the EU’s strategic culture is built on the “*founding myth*” of reconciliation and peaceful integration after the experiences of war and a consequent responsibility for advancement of global efforts to build security. [18] In this sense, the EU “*as a project for peace, having risen from the ashes of two world wars*” [19] initially constituted a “*civilian power*”, exercising its influence through economic strength, diplomatic cooperation and supranational institutions. [20] Following the EU’s inability to respond actively to the events in Rwanda and former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the Union started to develop also as a “*military power*”, introducing military capabilities and regulations on the use thereof. Consequently, the idea of a “*Military Power Europe*” became one of the narratives underlying the EU’s strategic culture,

calling for the establishment of effective military capabilities in order to protect the Union's security and interests. [21] As noted in the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, *"the idea that Europe is an exclusively 'civilian power' does not do justice to an evolving reality"* with numerous EU-led military operations [22] and a EU budget proposal set on 2 May 2018 suggesting a 22-fold increase in EU defence spending for 2021-2027. [23] While the EU's efforts to develop military capabilities are often deemed unsatisfactory, [24] it is nevertheless clear that it displays certain military ambitions and strives to possess forces capable of an *"early, rapid and when necessary, robust intervention"*. [25] This development of military capabilities did not deprive the Union of its *"civilian"* identity [26] and the blend of *"civilian power"* and *"military ambitions"* is reflected within the EU's strategic culture.

The literature discerns two other concepts which also comprise the foundation for the EU's strategic culture, namely human security and comprehensive approach. The concept of human security shifts the attention from the state as the traditional object of security and instead rests on an assumption that security should revolve around individual *"freedom from fear"* and *"freedom from want"*. Following Stępką, it can be understood as *"a comprehensive set of conditions under which a human being feels secure"*. [27] Depending on a conceptualisation, threats to human security might have solely a violent character or can include social, psychological, political and economic aspects of vulnerability. [28] In any case, as elaborated in the report by the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities, *"insecurity experienced by people living in places like the Middle East has a tendency to spread, as September 11 dramatically illustrated"* and should therefore be properly addressed. [29] That is why protection of individual human security *"provides an enduring and dynamic organizing frame for [the EU's] security action"*. [30] This dedication is reiterated across a variety of EU documents such as the Global Strategy for the EFSP, the Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence or the European Union Maritime Security Strategy. [31] Thus, the responsibility to protect individuals and their human rights constitutes a legitimate reason for the use of force by the Union. In this way, the EU not only realises its moral and legal obligation but also addresses problems that might eventually spill over and affect the security of EU citizens. [32] This view is supported by Matlary for whom *"a strategic culture for Europe must necessarily depend on notions of human security and human rights more than on traditional territorial defence of nationals"*. [33] Human security implies a need for a wider range of tools applied in order to address threats, as compared to the traditional, military-based protection of the state. In this sense, this notion complements the second concept underlying the EU's strategic culture – comprehensive approach to crisis response.

Comprehensive approach is understood as harmonisation and integration *"across the security, governance, development and political dimensions of international peace and stability operations"*. [34] This notion is deeply rooted in the EU's strategic culture as it is linked with the fundamental principle of coherence in the EU's external actions, signalled as far back as the Maastricht Treaty. [35] Comprehensive approach found its way into the European Security Strategy which declared the EU *"particularly well equipped to respond to (...) multi-faceted situations"* which cannot *"be tackled by purely military means"* [36] and was reiterated in the Global Strategy for the EFSP and the Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence. [37] In other words, the EU possesses a wide array of tools which can be used to stabilise the area of an operation, including military, economic and social instruments, but it is also open to cooperation with other actors involved in crisis response, such as international, national and non-governmental organisations. As noted by Norheim-Martinsen, *"the idea of a comprehensive approach to security [fits] well into the*

*conventional narrative of the European integration process as a project for peace by underlining the military dimension's secondary nature“.* [38]

Building on this overview, it can be argued that human security, comprehensive approach, and the blend of “*civilian power*“ with military ambitions, as well as such values as democracy, human dignity and the rule of law, constitute the foundational elements of the EU's strategic culture. They influence the Union's perception of, and preferable response to, crises, as well as its crisis response tools, such as civil-military cooperation. In this sense, the concepts of human security and comprehensive approach seem to be underwriting the way the EU conducts its military activities. They emphasise protection of human rights, post-conflict reconstruction and development aid, and reflect such values as cooperation, local ownership and human rights. At the same time, the Union strives to possess effective military capabilities which could be used to pursue its interests. In the following sections I will look into the two dominant perceptions of CIMIC and the way they are intertwined within the EU's approach to civil-military cooperation in the context of the Union's strategic culture.

## **Approaches to Civil-Military Cooperation**

### **NATO**

NATO developed a unitary concept of civil-military cooperation called NATO CIMIC. It was defined in 2001 as the *„co-ordination and co-operation, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civil actors, including national populations and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organisations and agencies“.* [39] In this understanding, NATO CIMIC is a military function performed in order to support the mandate of the military commander. This characteristic of NATO CIMIC is further strengthened by the conceptualisation of its main principles and functions. As such, the principle of mission primacy, set first by the NATO CIMIC doctrine Allied Joint Publication 9 (AJP-9) promulgated in 2003, was explicitly and inexplicitly replicated by other documents regulating the conduct of civil-military cooperation in NATO missions. [40]

The AJP-9 defined three core functions of NATO CIMIC as: civil-military liaison, support to the civilian environment and support to the force. [41] In this conceptualisation, two of the functions: the first and the third, emphasise the subordination of NATO CIMIC to the military mission and interest. Thus, civil-military liaison is conducted to facilitate and support the planning and conduct of NATO operations, while support to the force includes minimisation of disruptions caused by civilian actors to military activities, securing civilian resources (e.g. local personnel) and information, as well as raising acceptance of NATO's activities among the local population. [42] In the later version of the NATO CIMIC doctrine, the AJP-3.4.9 signed in 2013, the order of the functions was changed, putting the support for the force to second place and thus further accentuating its importance over the function of support to the civilian entities. [43] The revised doctrine of NATO CIMIC stresses the proactive role of CIMIC in operations planning and its advisory function. These provisions make it clear that for NATO the civil-military coordination is subordinate to the military goal. This is also a reflection of the mission structure as, contrary to UN missions, NATO military operations have a solely military command. In this sense, CIMIC is utilised as a “*force multiplier*“ and a tool for “*winning hearts and minds*“ for the support of the military commander. [44]



## United Nations

Contrary to NATO, the UN's concept of civil-military cooperation is two-fold: one represents a humanitarian staff function (Civil-Military Coordination, UN-CMCoord) [45] and the other a military function (UN-CIMIC). In this article I concentrate on UN-CIMIC as a concept corresponding to EU-CIMIC and NATO CIMIC. Its aim is to facilitate interactions between various actors present in the mission area in order to support the UN mission objectives and create conditions that enable civilian organisations and partners to perform their tasks. [46] Its functions are *“to support management of the operational and tactical interaction between military and civilian actors in all phases of peacekeeping operation; and (...) to support creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the mission mandate by maximizing the comparative advantage of all actors operating in the mission area.”* [47]

Contrary to the NATO understanding of CIMIC, the aim of UN-CIMIC is to *“create enabling conditions for civilian organisations and partners”*, [48] and thus to serve as a multiplier to civilian efforts. The core tasks are civil-military liaison and information sharing, as well as civil assistance. [49] There is no function which would provide support for the force, as it could be interpreted as an abuse of humanitarian and development activities to serve military aims. [50] As UN missions are led by civilian High Representatives of the Secretary General, it is not surprising that the UN's approach to civil-military cooperation is conducted in support of civilian goals. As observed by Holshek, *“UN-CIMIC stresses the primacy of civilian authority – working by, with, and through the civilian leadership. Rested on international legal frameworks, peacekeeping principles, and international criteria on the use of force, UN-CIMIC is complementary to humanitarian assistance and development.”* [51]

To sum up, the two approaches represented by the UN and NATO differ with regard to their civil/military orientation which can be easily differentiated by their definitions and core functions. While the UN is focused on supporting civilian actors in carrying out their humanitarian/reconstruction tasks and preserving the humanitarian space, NATO is oriented towards gaining support for the military activities and de-confliction between the military and civilian spheres. Where the UN emphasises the primacy of civilian authority, the Alliance underlines the primacy of the commander and his mission. In this sense, the UN and NATO represent two very different approaches to civil-military cooperation. [52]

## Discussion

### EU-CIMIC In-Between

Keeping in mind the differences in perspectives on CIMIC developed by the UN and NATO, let us now consider their influence on the EU's approach, and the relationship of these two perspectives to the foundational elements of the EU's strategic culture. Similarly, as in the case of the UN, the EU established two concepts regulating interactions between civilian and military entities. The difference lies in the orientation – while the UN's division revolves around humanitarian and military perspectives, the EU placed its concepts on an internal-external axis. The EU's internal approach to civil-military cooperation is named EU Civil-Military Coordination (EU CMCO); [53] while EU-CIMIC refers to the external dimension of civil-military cooperation and is based on the NATO doctrine. It is therefore a military function defined as *“the co-ordination and co-operation, in support of the mission, between military components of EU-led Crisis Management Operations*

*and civil actors (external to the EU), including national population and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organisations and agencies.”* [54]

In this article I focus on the latter concept.

The two main documents formulating the EU's CIMIC concept are not based on the Union's experiences in peacekeeping, as they were drafted before the Union conducted its first operations. Instead, they are modelled on NATO's regulations. This decision could be explained by practical and material reasons. The two organisations have shared most of their member states, along with having had already initiated the process of increasing interoperability between their military capabilities. The so-called Berlin Plus arrangements have enabled the exchange of classified information and given the EU access to NATO's military planning and assets. What is more important from the CIMIC point of view, Berlin Plus arrangements have also obliged both organisations to *“develop in a mutually reinforcing way and deliver the military capabilities they need for crisis management”*. [55] Consequently, the EU's official concept on civil-military cooperation has been designed in a way that allows for maximum harmonisation with the corresponding NATO doctrine. [56]

Therefore, the Union's official CIMIC concept owes to NATO its distinctively military-centred character. From the beginning, it has framed EU-CIMIC in terms of mission primacy and support to the military commander. [57] It has not referred to humanitarian principles, nor the necessity to respect (or protect) humanitarian space. Consequently, this approach has met with strong criticism from the civilian environment, voicing that EU-CIMIC is in fact a synonym to the *“hearts and minds”* tactics. [58] Despite consultations with the civilian environment, [59] the 2008 revision of the document has not done much to ease these fears. If anything, it has further strengthened the militaristic undertone of the concept. When specifying the principles of CIMIC, the Union reiterates NATO's provision that *“every effort should be made to secure and retain the willing cooperation of civilian organisations with which the allied force deals”*. [60] However, the official Union's concept includes an additional caveat, which the NATO doctrine lacks, and which states: *“Although not ultimately necessary, every effort should be made to secure the willing consent of external civilian organisations and local populations with which the EU military force is dealing.”* [61] By adding the clause *“although not ultimately necessary”*, the EU's concept has further diminished the *“civilian”* part of the civil-military equation, showing that its consent is not truly relevant and thus putting in question the benevolent undertone of the rest of the provision. Thus, the wording and the content of the EU's official CIMIC concept indicates that civil-military cooperation serves the military purpose.

Even though this military-centred perspective seems to be persistent in the concept and official texts defining EU-CIMIC, its practical side reveals its second nature – emphasising support towards civilian activities, respect towards humanitarian principles and protection of humanitarian space. As Gebhard observes, *“an in-depth analysis shows that in line with its comprehensive approach to security, EU-CIMIC clearly goes beyond traditional CIMIC conceptions in terms of their exclusive focus on the military support function of CIMIC.”* [62] In this vein, EU-CIMIC aligns more with the UN's approach to civil-military cooperation and is conducted to ensure *“the mutual benefit of both military and external civil actors”*. [63] This reorientation might be linked to the fact that the EU increasingly cooperates with the UN on a variety of policies and issues, including peacekeeping. [64] As observed by Hummel and Pietz, *“from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Mali and the Central African Republic, they have cooperated in the field through various activities and*

*frameworks and in an increasingly mutually reinforcing manner.*” [65] Examples of such cooperation include the EU operations conducted under the UN mandate or as an answer to special requests from the UN Secretary-General, the EUFOR Chad/CAR and the Operation Artemis acting as “*bridging missions*” for UN operations and a close collaboration between the EU and UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations in planning the EU mission in Mali. [66] This cooperation propels the EU to shape its crisis response tools in a particular way. Indeed, the report of the 2007 consultations with EU member states mirrors the belief that the relationship between humanitarian and military actors should be based on the principles included in the UN’s Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief and the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Complex Emergencies. [67] In this sense, EU member states declare their commitment to respect towards humanitarian principles and humanitarian space, as well as the principle of separation of humanitarian activities from forces that are perceived as belligerents or actively involved in combat. [68] These findings support the assumption that the Union conforms to the UN’s vision of the standards guiding the civil-military relationship. Consequently, Metcalfe, Haysom and Gordon infer from the report that “[the EU] *capacities must be deployed in a way which complements and supports the work of humanitarian organizations.*” [69] Also, an analysis of the accounts of application of EU-CIMIC across various EU-led missions shows consistency in the civilian-oriented way the civil-military cooperation is conducted, thus revealing a persistent, characteristic pattern of behaviour diverging from the way prescribed in EU-CIMIC documents.

This observation is supported by an account of Major General David Leakey, the EUFOR Althea Force Commander, who notes that one of the “*key military tasks*” of EUFOR Althea was to support the civilian efforts in the areas of economy, rule of law, police, and defence reform, in close cooperation with other civilian actors. [70] EU-CIMIC in Bosnia and Herzegovina was thus supporting local authorities in accordance with the principles of local ownership and peaceful integration. The same approach to EU-CIMIC could also be observed during EUFOR Chad/CAR, where EU-CIMIC activities were designed in a way to respect and protect the humanitarian space while supporting the Chadian population. As described by Churrua, the EUFOR Chad/CAR personnel maintained regular dialogue with the humanitarian actors on the ground, consulting their activities. [71] As a result, the military mission concentrated on the protection of individuals and their rights, rather than on winning “*hearts and minds*” of the population. [72] One of the most recent examples of this behavioural pattern in EU-led military missions is EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia which has a CIMIC component liaising with civilian organisations with the goal to help migrants. [73] Also in this case, EU-CIMIC seems to be following the paths of its UN counterpart and working towards the aim of supporting the civilian environment through protection of vulnerable individuals and fighting against human trafficking. This brief overview of the various EU operations and their CIMIC components shows that, indeed, EU-CIMIC’s implementation seems to diverge from its distinctively military-centred on-paper policy. In practice, EU-CIMIC seems to be more sensitive to the needs and actions of the civilian environment and emphasises the necessity of strengthening local ownership and human security as well as the protection of humanitarian space. In other words, the behavioural pattern of EU-CIMIC resembles the civilian-centred approach presented by the UN.

### **EU-CIMIC and the EU’s Strategic Culture**

It could be argued that the EU’s approach to CIMIC is paradoxical in its nature as it contains both military- and civilian-centred perspectives on civil-military cooperation. The strongly militaristic



wording of the EU-CIMIC concept does not leave much space for a civilian-oriented CIMIC, yet its application seems to indicate an inclination towards supporting the civilian environment. How can these two dissonant perspectives coexist within a single organisation's approach? The answer to this question can be partially achieved through material explanations. The EU-CIMIC concept was designed during the initial phase of development of the EU's foreign and security policy when harmonisation of policies and capability pooling and sharing with NATO were strongly emphasised. The application of EU-CIMIC takes place under different circumstances, with the UN increasingly acting as a key partner in the field. Yet, while these reasons allow to understand why both of these approaches emerged, they do not explain why both of them are still maintained. Their coexistence can be understood when we consider this seemingly inconsistent mixture of EU-CIMIC perspectives in the context of the EU's strategic culture and its foundational elements. In this sense, the EU's strategic culture constitutes a space within which military- and civilian-centred approaches to CIMIC intertwine. Based on this assumption, let us discuss how both CIMIC perspectives relate to the foundational elements of the EU's strategic culture.

The decision to follow NATO's example in the official concept is consistent with the EU's pursuance of multilateralism and, to some extent, comprehensiveness in crisis response. Harmonisation of policies with NATO allows for capability pooling and sharing and consequent minimisation of working at cross purposes or duplication of efforts. This relates not only to the units which perform CIMIC tasks during crisis response operations, but also institutions, such as the NATO-accredited CIMIC Centre of Excellence, which can provide the expertise and CIMIC training to both organisations and is already conducting CIMIC seminars for the EU Battle Groups. [74] The idea to strengthen the EU's military capabilities by conducting CIMIC in support of the military commander is also consistent with the Union's development as a "*military power*". It reinforces the military capabilities of the EU's crisis response and strives towards increasing its effectiveness. In this sense, it emphasises the military ambitions of the Union as a capable and effective security actor. However, this military-centred perspective on CIMIC seems to make it less relevant with regard to the other foundational elements of the EU's strategic culture. By emphasising the primacy of the military mission, it only indirectly supports the values of democracy, rule of law and equality. It does not contradict these values but advocates them as a by-product of supporting the military force. Furthermore, the military-centred CIMIC inadvertently undermines the notion of human security and human dignity by treating civilians more as a means to an end through the implied "*hearts and minds*" tactics. In this sense, civil-military cooperation focused on supporting the military, as inscribed in NATO's and the EU's official CIMIC concepts, is not closely connected with all of the foundational elements of the Union's strategic culture.

As already mentioned, the official EU-CIMIC concept does not substantiate the existence of the civilian-centred aspects of EU-CIMIC as they are not inscribed into its provisions. The regulations do not leave much space for the focus on humanitarian principles and the protection of humanitarian space. However, this civilian-oriented side of EU-CIMIC is visible in the way the Union conducts civil-military cooperation in the field. This might have its roots in the growing EU-UN crisis response cooperation. However, a closer look at the compatibility of civilian-oriented CIMIC with the foundational elements of the EU's strategic culture might also be helpful in understanding why it is pursued. The civilian-centred CIMIC emphasises the fact that CFSP/CSDP operations are a part of a broader effort and underlines the significance of non-military tools in EU-led crisis response. In this way it reinforces the EU's attachment to comprehensive approach. It also underlines the importance of Europe as a "*civilian power*" while at the same time does not belittle

its military ambitions. Furthermore, the civilian-oriented approach to civil-military cooperation seems to be more in line with the “*founding myth*” of the EU’s strategic culture. It emphasises the necessity to support integration and reconstruction after war – tasks most often conducted by civilian actors. In this sense, the UN-styled civil-military cooperation serves as a multiplier of civilian efforts aiming at improvement of local capacity and ownership rather than winning “*hearts and minds*”. In accordance with the EU’s values of democracy and rule of law, it stresses the long-term perspective of social and economic development. Finally, the concept of human security together with respect towards human dignity and human rights seem to be more attuned to the civilian-centred approach to civil-military cooperation. Specialised humanitarian and development organisations together with local authorities, rather than the armed forces, are usually considered the most suitable actors to work towards the improvement of living conditions, raising awareness about human rights, and strengthening civil society in the area of operation. By conducting CIMIC in support of those civilian actors, the EU acts in a way more coherent with human security as one of the foundational elements of its strategic culture. It could, therefore be argued that these two factors – cooperation with the UN and the EU’s strategic culture – contributed to the development and persistence of EU-CIMIC in a way unforeseen in the official documents.

## Conclusions

As shown in this discussion, the nature of the EU’s approach to CIMIC is complex as it encompasses elements of two different perspectives on civil-military cooperation which are seemingly not compatible. The first one, represented by NATO and mimicked in the documents establishing the EU-CIMIC concept, underscores the primacy of the military mission and the importance of supporting the force. The second one, introduced by the UN and visible in the application of EU-CIMIC in the field, is performed with an objective to create enabling conditions for both civilian and military actors and to protect humanitarian space. The emergence of these two perspectives within the EU’s approach to civil-military cooperation can be explained by material reasons. When drafting the concept, the EU was guided by the principle of harmonisation of policies with NATO in accordance with the Berlin Plus arrangements and the prospect of pooling and sharing of military capabilities with the Alliance. However, the practice of crisis response operations shows that the Union cooperates mainly with the UN. This, together with the similar intensity of EU and UN-led operations, propelled EU-CIMIC into the UN-styled, civilian-oriented CIMIC. What these material explanations fail to clarify is why these two perspectives still coexist within the EU-CIMIC. Here, a closer look at the strategic culture of the Union helps to understand this complex nature of the EU’s approach to civil-military cooperation.

Both of the perspectives on CIMIC are compatible with, and intertwine within, the EU’s strategic culture. On the one hand, the military-centred perspective does, to a certain extent, support the notion of comprehensive approach, as it allows for greater interoperability and harmonisation between the EU’s and NATO’s military engagements. It also strengthens the military ambitions of the Union through the support of the military commander. On the other hand, the civilian-centred CIMIC is also compatible with the concept of comprehensive approach, but it seems to enable the accommodation of a broader array of efforts by reinforcing the achievement of civilian objectives and putting greater emphasis on the protection of humanitarian space. At the same time, it corresponds better with other foundational elements of the EU’s strategic culture: it emphasises liberal values of democracy, development and peaceful integration; it strengthens the image of the EU as a “*civilian power*” and actively supports the notions of human security and respect for human

rights. In this sense, the civilian-centred perspective on civil-military cooperation seems to be positioned closer to the core of the Union's strategic culture.

This division between the military-centred perspective promoted by the official documents and civilian-centred perspective dominating the application of EU-CIMIC in the field hinders the position of EU-CIMIC within the Union's crisis response. On the one hand, it is conducted in order to increase the cooperation and coordination of the EU forces with other actors involved in crisis response, rendering CIMIC an important function in light of the EU's comprehensive approach. On the other hand, the militaristic undertone of the official provisions might lead to a contradictory effect and discourage other actors from engaging with the EU forces. With a unified approach to civil-military cooperation, aligned with a larger number of the foundational elements of the strategic culture, the EU-CIMIC could, to a larger extent, facilitate communication and coordination of actions between various actors present in the area of an EU-led operation. From the organisational point of view, this solution could be introduced if the EU-led crisis response was placed under civilian direction, similar as in the case of the UN's missions. Subordinating the Union's military efforts to a civilian High Representative would change the balance of power within the EU-led crisis response, but it might aid in eliminating the current stove-pipe type of command chain which separates civilian and military efforts and highlight the core of the EU's strategic culture. Without a doubt, this proposal would require further discussion within the constitutional and institutional scope of the EU. However, in this design, EU-CIMIC could play a more prominent role as a strong link between various elements of crisis response. Instead of pursuing interoperability of capabilities with NATO, the EU could develop its approach to civil-military cooperation in a way that is more aligned with its strategic needs and consequently the core of its strategic culture.

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